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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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THE SOURCE EVALUATIONS IN THIS REPORT ARE DEFINITIVE.
THE APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.
(FOR KEY SEE REVERSE)

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Saftra on page 5 should read zavtra. Czarist, page 7, paragraph 32, should be Tsarist.

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Comment. The ministry referred to in paragraph 31 as the Ministry of Armament and Munition is the Ministry of Armaments. The administrative changes therein have been reported by other sources as having occurred in 1950.

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CONSUMER GOODS

Food Prices

2. The food prices indicated below are those which existed in the Ostashkov area in June 1952.

	Prices (in rubles) in State Controlled Stores	Prices (in rubles) in Free Market
1 kg. brown bread	1.80	--
1 kg. white bread	3.50 - 6.00	--
1 kg. pork	--	30 - 35
1 kg. beef	--	20 - 30
1 kg. veal or lamb	--	18 - 25
1 kg. cheese	35	--
1 kg. cottage cheese	--	10 - 12

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	Prices (in rubles) in State Controlled Stores	Prices (in rubles) in Free Market
1 kg. butter	35	50 - 70
1 kg. margarine	18	--
1 kg. fish (e.g. pike and perch)	--	9 - 13
1 kg. coffee (Brazilian)	60	--
50 g. tea (Russian)	4.50 - 6.00	--
100 g. chocolate	18 - 25	--
1 kg. sugar	10.50	--
1 kg. flour	4.50 - 6.50	15 - 20
3 l. bot. tomato juice	32	--
1 jar preserved vegetables (e.g. peas, beans)	5.40	--
1 bot. champagne (Russian)	32	--
1 l. vodka	27	--
1 l. milk	--	4 - 6
1 l. cognac	45	--
20 cigarettes	1.80	--
100 g. tobacco	5.00 - 13.60	--
1 l. cream	--	25
1 l. marmalade	8 - 12	--

Availability and Quality of Food Products

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3.

[redacted] In the beginning the meals were good and quite extensive, and contained caviar, smoked salmon, and warm dishes--even for breakfast. Afterwards, however, the meals gradually began to get worse, and finally became unbearable. Especially affected were the children. No special cooking was provided for them except that milk was issued in small quantities. It was quite impossible to feed babies caviar, salmon, and steaming sauerkraut soup for breakfast. Complaints were presented to the installation director who promised to remedy the situation, but conditions did not improve. Soon after this [redacted] 50X1-HUM Germans were issued ration cards and were allowed to procure food supplies in bulk.

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4. Following the price reduction of 1951, there was always a shortage of butter in the state-controlled stores, and it was often unavailable. Therefore [redacted] compelled to buy butter on the free market. Free market prices fluctuated with the availability of products. Desired items could not always be obtained. [redacted] the Soviet customers paid considerably less for some products than we did. It seemed to be common knowledge that [redacted] Germans were receiving higher pay than the Soviets. Therefore, the free market prices were, as a general rule, raised to fit [redacted] purchasing capacity. It was not infrequently that the Soviet citizens objected [redacted] and they insisted that [redacted] should pay the higher price. It was apparently agreed that [redacted] should be charged as much as possible since, according to a Soviet saying, "The Germans are inconceivably rich and they can pay". 50X1-HUM

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5. Flour could be obtained only on holidays, e.g., the first of May, the October Revolution, etc. At other times this item was never available in government stores. It could often be bought on the blackmarket at a tripled price. The purchasing of this item was not always a simple matter since the blackmarket vendors were extremely cautious in selling it, fearing the severe penalties. The shortage of flour was a mystery [] because white bread was always in sufficiency. However, four to eight weeks before the new harvest an acute shortage of bread was experienced which resulted in consumers having to spend many hours in "bread queues" which formed in the mornings in front of bakeries. In general, bread was a more important food item to the Soviets [] 50X1-HUM
6. Food supplies were more available on Gorodomlya Island than in the nearby areas. Therefore, the Soviets having access to the Island stores made daily food purchases for themselves and their friends who lived in Ostashkov. After working hours [] bread, cereals, and other food items were packed into sacks which were being taken from the Island, apparently to Ostashkov. It is possible that these items may have been diverted to blackmarkets located in those regions containing poorer collective farms. There were a number of these in the vicinity of Ostashkov. 50X1-HUM
7. [] near Brest-Litovsk [] 50X1-HUM
the apparent difference in the food prices and food availability. 50X1-HUM
At train stops the natives offered to sell [] eggs, butter, cheese, milk, etc., at a cost less than that which had been charged in Ostashkov or on Gorodomlya Island. 50X1-HUM

Merchandise of Non-Soviet Origin

8. [] in 1946, a great many American products, especially canned goods were on sale at the free market stores. Other merchandise of non-Soviet origin included: coffee (packed in bags bearing Brazilian markings); and shoes (imported from Czechoslovakia, and having the Bata trademark). [] 50X1-HUM
[] 50X1-HUM
[] Polish canned jams, among others, could also be purchased. The German manufactured goods available were: "Diamant" bicycles (800 rubles), "Thiel" pocket watches (165 rubles), and many items of rayon lingerie and stockings containing the "Bamberg" trademark. Whether these items were imported from East Germany or manufactured by former German plants which had been moved to the USSR is unknown [] 50X1-HUM
[] a large number of light industry plants including equipment and personnel, had been transplanted to the USSR. It was also known that the Germans who worked in such plants producing consumer goods were repatriated much earlier, for instance, the Wellner-Silver plant personnel. Chocolate displaying the "Burkbraun" trademark was being sold in Russian wrappings. Burkbraun was a well known chocolate factory formerly located in Cottbus.) 50X1-HUM

Rationing

9. During the period 1946 to 1952 gradual improvements in the availability of consumer goods became apparent. The only commodities that could be easily purchased in 1946 were vodka and tobacco products. The food rationing cards which [] were graded into several categories:

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The non-working Soviet population and the wives of German deportees were allotted smaller food rations than were the German specialists. German families which included several non-working members could hardly exist. [redacted] 50X1-HUM

10. Basic food items, with the exception of milk and bread, were issued in bulk once per month. This rationing system presented a considerable problem to housewives who continuously were worried about the preservation of perishable items.
11. Immediately after the end of rationing (1947), the stores began to display better goods. However, all the goods on display were not always available for purchase. [redacted] the following items were readily available as of 1948: coffee, tea, cocoa, candy, canned fish, marmalades, preserved fruits, numerous alcoholic beverages, cigarettes, bread (except a few weeks before the new harvest), salt, and a large assortment of toilet soap, perfumes, face powder, etc. 50X1-HUM
12. The price reduction was also reflected in an improvement in styles and wearing apparel. [redacted] the clothes of the Soviets resembled tattered rags, but their clothes later improved considerably. Soviet textiles did not appear to be dye-proof, and faded easily. 50X1-HUM
13. The population's reaction to the improved purchasing conditions following the end of rationing varied. Many of the Soviets who had been in Germany and in other foreign countries during and after the war were careful in expressing themselves on this subject. They occasionally admitted that conditions abroad were better, but immediately hastened to add that these standards would soon be achieved and surpassed in the USSR. On the other hand, the Soviets who had never left their native surroundings of Ostashkov seemed to find it inconceivable to imagine conditions in the USSR less than perfect. This feeling was expressed by a Soviet woman who cleaned our home.

SALARIES

14. A Soviet engineer who has just graduated receives a monthly salary of 1200 rubles at his first position. [redacted] 50X1-HUM
[redacted] This initial salary is generally raised after two years, and, as others, could be supplemented by premiums. 50X1-HUM
15. A common laborer's monthly salary was generally 600 rubles. [redacted] a female interpreter [redacted] monthly salary was 100 rubles, with which she was obliged to support her aged mother who received a minimum pension allotment of 130 rubles per month. 50X1-HUM

HOUSING CONDITIONS

16. [redacted] 50X1-HUM
a group of recently renovated buildings. These consisted of two large brick buildings, each containing twelve three-room and kitchen apartments, and eight wooden constructions with seven two- and three-room apartments in each. The scientists and

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specialists were placed in the brick buildings. Each family, regardless of its size, was assigned a three-room apartment. These apartments were freshly painted and a few were equipped with bath tubs; however, ovens and boilers were not furnished.

17. A field generator (Lokomobile) provided electric current which generally was undependable. The generator did not operate at all times, and when in operation it generated an unsteady current which produced a wavering sort of light. To supplement the poor cooking facilities, Primus petroleum burners were used. These burners appeared to be standard equipment in each Soviet home. An unmistakable smell of petroleum was present at the entrances of each house. Ovens and stoves could only be fired with wood. The monthly rent for a three-room apartment was 55 rubles.
18. In the beginning Soviet girls were assigned to the German families to do general housework such as cleaning, firing the stoves, etc. After a short time this help was withdrawn, and the girls were forbidden to enter [redacted]. These girls had also provided the firewood. With their withdrawal the German families were at a complete loss as to the procurement of wood supplies. [redacted] finally resorted to chopping trees in the nearby forest, which was followed by serious complications. The Soviets considered this action as a serious offense against the state. Many of the Germans received reprimands, and this offense was held against them throughout their entire stay in the USSR. Requests for wood supplies were made to the director who always replied with a "saftira" - tomorrow, or "skoro" - soon. [redacted] learned that these terms could mean tomorrow, next month, or next year. Later [redacted] were advised that wood could be bought from the installation's supply dump at 45 to 55 rubles per cubic meter. This wood was often of very poor quality and we felt that it had been procured somewhere at a very low cost and was being resold [redacted] at a considerable profit--of which the director was receiving a sizeable amount. [redacted] complaints were usually rejected with the count charge that it was [redacted] own fault. [redacted] should not have started the war and invaded their country; this had caused their not being able to gather lumber for nearly seven years.
19. With the arrival of a group of Germans from the Moscow region in the spring of 1947 housing conditions on the Island became extremely overcrowded. In meeting this situation the Soviet administration merely ordered that many of the Island families would have to give up some of their rooms to the new arrivals. These crowded circumstances resulted in many disagreements and quarrels, and occasionally in fistcuffs.
20. The housing conditions of the Soviet common laborers and those of the higher-paid employees differed to a great extent. This obvious example of social inequality in the heavily-propagandized "classless society" of the USSR impressed me very much.
21. Most of the Germans possessed their own furniture. Those that did not have any rented it from the Soviets at a monthly rate of 100-150 rubles. The Soviets especially marvelled at [redacted] furniture. However, many felt superior in their belief that such things as electricity and other inventions were enjoyed solely in the USSR. [redacted] a large number of [redacted]

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Soviet co-workers, particularly those with higher education, were very proud of Soviet progress and achievements in other fields as well, e.g., the opportunity which was offered to everyone in the USSR to attend schools, etc.)

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22. In the beginning [] not charged for electricity or water. After two years the Soviets billed [] 30 rubles per month for electricity during the summer, and 60 rubles per month during the winter. During the last few years [] were required to pay a monthly sum of five rubles per person for water.

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FAMILY LIFE

23. The structure of family life in the USSR is completely different from anywhere else in the world. [] attribute this to the fact that both man and wife are employed during the day and are seldom together at home. The children spend their days at the kindergarten. During the evenings the parents attend numerous meetings, training courses, etc. Few of the Soviet women that are employed cook at home. Even luncheons are eaten in public eating places. [] virtually no "family life" in the USSR as it is known in the Western world.

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24. [] no trial marriages [] There appeared to be many unattached women: possibly they had been widowed during the war.
25. When a Soviet husband and wife are divorced, the man is obligated to support only the children. The alimony is not paid by the man directly, but is deducted from his salary and paid to the former wife, or whoever has assumed the responsibility of rearing the children. The deductions constitute a prescribed percentage of the man's total earnings. [] following divorce as [] After three years of waiting, a Soviet engineer finally obtained his divorce. The wife was given custody of the child. The engineer's monthly salary was 2000 rubles, of which he had to pay about 30 per cent (600 rubles) as support for the child. His former wife was employed as a librarian and earned 1300 rubles per month. Her salary, coupled with the money allotted her for her son's support resulted in her having a higher monthly income than her former husband.

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26. The kindergarden building on Gorodomlya Island contained eight to 10 rooms. The ages of the 25 children in attendance there ranged from a few months to seven years old. They were in the care of a chief nurse who was assisted by two or three other nurses. The staff also included a laundress, cleaning woman, and a cook. [] the mothers were satisfied with the care their children were receiving. The children were brought to the kindergarden at 8:00 A.M., and were taken home at 5:30 P.M. A small percentage of the parents' salary was deducted for the care of children. It probably did not exceed 60 rubles per month. The children received all their meals at the kindergarden. [] everything there was very clean. A small garden with trees, flowers, and small benches surrounded the building.

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SOVIET SOCIETY

27. [] the Soviet privileged class is primarily composed of those who worked in, or with, the Party or MVD. Also in this class were those who occupied important positions, e.g. [] director, chief engineer, etc., and the members of the government, whom everyone seemed to consider demigods. 50X1-HUM

28. It is quite understandable that persons with political background and authority were considered important and in a different class. Naturally everyone sought their favor in an effort to avoid unpleasantnesses and gain advantages. These people were always better dressed and more genteel than the common workers. The privileged class enjoyed better housing facilities, but their children were not automatically selected for higher education. 50X1-HUM

[] considerable importance was placed on good grades and report cards (Zeugnis) for admission to higher educational institutions. With a favorable school report one could receive a relatively higher scholarship (Stipendium) amounting to approximately 300 to 400 rubles per month. However, the poorer Soviet families often could not afford to let their children continue schooling to the age of 20 or 22, even if they were in possession of a good scholarship. Many parents anxiously awaited the time when their children completed public school (at about 15 years of age) so that they could begin to earn a living and thereby assist the family. (Public school was entered at the age of seven.) 50X1-HUM

29. [] a certain amount of tension existed between the different classes, but it could not be detected on the surface. The people were simply uncommunicative on this subject either from fear or caution. 50X1-HUM

30. []

31. During 1948 great administrative changes occurred within the Ministry of Armament and Munition [] Names, which until then had been important, suddenly disappeared; many of the signatures which appeared were new and completely unknown. It was then rumored that espionage acts had been committed [] 50X1-HUM

RELIGION

32. Whereas almost all of the older Soviets who had been raised during the Czarist times remained close to the church (they usually wore a crucifix), the attitude of the younger Soviets was either indifferent or definitely negative.

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33. Services were held in one of the numerous churches in the Ostashkov area. The other churches were either in ruins, neglected and abandoned, or served as bakeries, dairies, etc. The church in which services were held was well attended. Soviet clerics and nuns were frequently seen strolling in the streets. It was said that these nuns received no support from the state, but were earning their livelihood with knitting, embroidery, and other needlework.

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CRIME AND CORRUPTION

34. Embezzlement was the most frequent misdemeanor [redacted] As a result, very few of the Soviet public officials remained in their positions for any length of time. This type of fraud was a daily occurrence. For example a Soviet woman, after having held the position of manager of the Island's post office branch for two years was sent to a labor camp for misappropriating 20,000 rubles; a sales girl employed in the clothing store was sentenced to four years of hard labor for overcharging customers on merchandise, especially on rugs and furs, and making a profit as high as 2,000 rubles on one sale. The pay clerks and bookkeepers were also twice replaced for having misappropriated public funds. [redacted] 50X1-HUM
- [redacted] fraud and embezzlement were not looked upon as crimes against society or as serious matters, but rather as matters of routine living. 50X1-HUM
35. Thievery and pick-pocketing often occurred in the streets and public markets. One had to be very careful when carrying anything in pockets and handbags. [redacted] 50X1-HUM
- [redacted] stealing seemed to have subsided to a certain extent. 50X1-HUM
36. An ancient monastery which had been converted into a prison for juvenile delinquents was located on the island of the Peshi in Lake Seliger. It could be seen when one travelled from Gorodomla to Ostashkov. From the distance [redacted] could see that prison walls and watchtowers had been erected. It was said that the young criminals detained there were making telephone instruments. 50X1-HUM
37. In general, persons returning from prisons were neither shunned nor in anyway ostracized by the Soviet population.
38. It appeared that everyone in the USSR was susceptible to bribes. The post official, the tailor, the shoemaker could all be induced to expedite their work for a consideration (usually vodka). Furthermore [redacted] bribery no doubt also met with success in higher Soviet circles. 50X1-HUM

PUBLIC OPINION

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39. Negative attitudes on the parts of the Soviets toward the Communist regime were not perceptible, since the Soviets would not divulge their opinions to us. However, the support of the Soviet system is obviously strong, particularly the support of the younger generation. [redacted]

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40. [] STALIN, as well as many of the old 50X1-HUM
generals of the revolutionary times are held in great esteem
by the majority of the population. However, it appeared that the
functionaries of local party organs were frequently criticized. The
attitude of the population toward MVD officials was one of extreme
fear, not of specific individuals, but of the entire organization.
[] never heard any Soviet criticizing the Soviet system. 50X1-HUM
41. "American monopolistic capitalists" were held responsible for
all wrongs, evil, and disunity among nations. This was standard
propaganda, and was repeated incessantly.
42. According to the Soviet radio, the Marshall Plan is nothing
more than an "evil capitalistic deception maneuver". The
Soviets seemed to know nothing further about the Plan.
43. [] the Soviets fear another war. They were made 50X1-HUM
to believe that the Americans were planning to overrun the
people's republics (Volksdemokratien), and thereby start wa50X1-HUM
44. [] the outbreak of the Korean War did not
produce undue excitement or any particular reaction on the part
of the Soviet population. The Soviets did not seem to get
aroused about events which occurred outside of the Soviet borders,
and accepted news events somewhat passively. Everybody, as
a matter of fact, was convinced that the Chinese soldiers had
a hand in the fighting. [] bewildered questions as to the 50X1-HUM
legality of Chinese participation were usually answered with,
"Could you ever distinguish a Chinese from a Korean"? This
was considered a joke. Daily newspapers displayed on bulletin
boards and walls carried stories of the newly reported bacter-
iological warfare. During protest meetings signatures were
collected, resolutions passed, etc. [] 50X1-HUM
people were beginning to believe what they read and heard.
No news could be obtained by the Soviet masses other than that
disseminated by the propaganda organs.

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